

A Mid-day Meditation

From

Sue's Perspective

*"Postmodern, post-Christian, post-Protestant, and post-denominational. What do all these posts mean? That we know where we have been but that we have no idea where we are going."* - Phyllis Tickle

The late Phyllis Tickle is one of my favourite modern-day theologians. She was honest, a straight shooter, authentic and above all, a woman of integrity. Phyllis would cringe at the two preceding sentences, because above all else, she was a humble woman who had no intention of becoming a theologian of any description. She did not study theology, she was a teacher by profession who became a journalist, author and, as God would have it, a theologian. Phyllis had such an understanding of church history that it boggles the mind. What she saw above all else was the path that the church followed over the centuries as it wound through reformation after reformation, and from this she was willing to stick her neck out and state the obvious.

In recent memory there have been many iterations of the emerging church movement including The Emergent Church in the United States and Fresh Expressions in the United Kingdom. What the emerging church movement has determined is that the church is currently "post-almost-everything"...

*... "Postmodern, post-Christian, post-Protestant, and post-denominational..."*

What does all of this mean? Does it mean that as Christians we have been getting it wrong all these years? Does it mean that we are getting it wrong now? I don't believe that anyone has been or is currently getting it wrong. What has been happening is – and hold onto your hats – the church has been changing with the times, albeit reluctantly. We, as church have a pretty clear picture of where we have been and how it has shaped where we are now. What it also says to me is, if we really examine where we have been, maybe, just maybe, we can get moving in a forward direction.

*What do all these posts mean?...*

Do I agree with Phyllis' statement that we have no idea where we are going? Yes...and no. I think that if we actually know where we are going, we would rush to get there and miss a great deal of what God has in store for us. I also think that if we don't have some idea about where we want to be and even how we might get there, we would throw in the towel. What I take from the statement Phyllis made is that in order for us to move forward as church, there needs to be some mystery – God's mystery, involved in the shaping of what we become. Is it bad that we might have no idea where we are going? I don't think so...unless we omit God from the equation. These times in which live, are forcing us to acknowledge that change is in the wind – like it or not – and not knowing exactly how it will pan out can be exciting as long as we bring God along for the ride...

*That we know where we have been but that we have no idea where we are going."*

Once again, I cannot leave the meditation with the last statement. I would have to add to the original statement...but with God's guidance, we will arrive just in time for us to pick up and move along again...